

The Muse

The Newsletter of the Museum of Biblical & Sacred Writings

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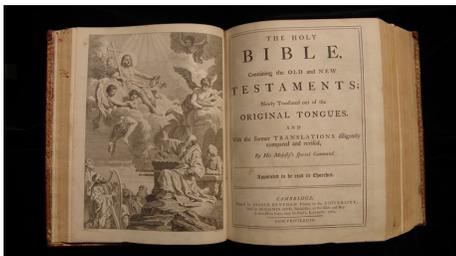
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THE RABBI HAIM ASA COLLECTION

The cataloging of the recent donation of books and poster prints from the Rabbi Haim Asa Estate has begun. While the process is ongoing, a few pieces have stood out and are worth announcing here. The first notable book is a collection of Ancient Near Eastern texts translated into English. It contains myths and stories from such places as Samaria and Egypt and offers an interesting look into the cultures contemporary to Ancient Israel. A German Bible is also included in the collection, and while not particularly old, it is bound with a wooden cover. Finally, the collection contains an early 1900's Bible in two volumes meant for daily reading. It contains the Jewish Scriptures and rabbinical commentary for clarification and instruction. This is only a sample of the volumes in the collection, which is currently available at the Museum office.

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A TRANSLATOR OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE



Do you realize that over one billion copies of the King James Bible have been published over the last 400 years? Commissioned to be translated by King James I of England in 1604, it took until 1611 to have it completed for publication by about four dozen scholars, all members by the Church of England.

Recently, a notebook contained the translation notes of Samuel Ward, one of the translators of the King James Bible, came to light. His notes are dated from between 1604 and 1608. It is the earliest known draft of the King James Bible.
(Biblical Archaeology Review, May/June 2016, p. 19)

THE PATIENCE OF AN ARCHAEOLOGIST

British archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley excavated the Sumerian city of Ur (in present southern Iraq) from 1922 to 1934. Woolley and his team uncovered parts of the ziggurat, temples, cemeteries, royal tombs, and the Great Death Pit with the remains of 74 people.

One of the most interesting finds was the Standard of Ur. The Standard of Ur is a wooden box with inlaid mosaics on both sides. One side, often called "the peace side," shows the upper class feasting, while commoners offer the products of their labor. The other side, or "war side," shows the warriors and the prisoners they conquered, who often became slaves. This Standard of Ur dates to approximately 2500 BC.

(National Geographic History, May-June, 2016, pp. 30-41)

HOW BIG WAS ANCIENT JERUSALEM?

Today most of us live in large cities, with populations, for the most part, well over 5,000 or 10,000 people. Can you imagine living in Jerusalem when it was King David's capital with a population of 400 to 1,000 citizens?

A new study has been released by Jerusalem Archaeologist Hillel Geva and the Israel Exploration Society on the size of Jerusalem during different periods of its history. Professor Geva bases his estimations on the types and sizes of archaeological finds at different levels. Other prominent scholars had previously estimated the population of Jerusalem at different points of history to be between 800 to 3,000 - hardly what we would call a metropolis.

The following details Hillel Geva's population estimates during different periods of Jerusalem's history:

- King Solomon's Jerusalem: 2,000 people
- 8th Century BC: 8,000 people
- 7th - 6th Centuries BC: 6,000 people
- Hellenistic (Hasmonean) Period (150 - 50 BC): 8,000 people
- Herodian (Early Roman) Period (50 BC - 70 AD): 10,000 - 20,000 people
- Byzantine Period (4th - 7th Centuries AD): 10,000 - 15,000 people
- Islamic Period (10th - 11th Centuries AD): 7,000 people

As you can see, throughout history, the population of Jerusalem was directly related to what was happening in the city at the time!

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